

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 COME-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 AID-05 PC-05 OES-05

/063 W

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R 171110Z JUL 75

FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0507

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL PESHAWAR

UNCLAS LAHORE 0834

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AGEN, PK

SUBJ: FLOOD CONDITIONS BUILDING UP IN PUNJAB

1. ACCORDING TO PRESS AND RADIO REPORTS, CONFIRMED IN PART BY PERSONAL OBSERVATION, FLOOD CONDITIONS HAVE DEVELOPED IN NORTHEASTERN DISTRICTS OF PAKISTAN PUNJAB OVER PAST 72 HOURS AS RESULT OF UNUSUALLY HEAVY SEASONAL RAINS JULY 15 AND 16.

2. INDICATORS: CATCHMENT AREAS OF RAVI RIVER REPORTEDLY RECORDED ELEVEN INCHES RAINFALL JULY 15-16; SHAKARGARH SECTOR OF SIALKOT DISTRICT (WHERE RAVI ENTERS PAKISTAN FROM INDIA) REPORTS NINE INCHES IN SAME PERIOD. LAHORE AREA RECEIVED 3.5 INCHES JULY 15 AND THREE MORE JULY 16 CAUSING MINOR LOCAL FLOODING, WIDESPREAD INCONVENIENCE AND SOME DISTRESS. HEAVY RAINFALL REPORTED IN JHELMUM AND CHENAB CATCHMENT AREAS IN INDIAN KASHMIR HAS CAUSED RAPID RISE IN FLOW OF THESE RIVERS TO PAKISTAN, MORE IN CHENAB THAN JHELMUM.

3. LOCAL RAINS HAVE ISOLATED MANY VILLAGES, INTERRUPTED COMMUNICATIONS AND INUNDATED FIELDS TEMPORARILY, BUT CLEAR, SUNNY JULY 17 HAS IMPROVED SITUATION. HOWEVER, DANGER REMAINS OF RIVERINE FLOODING AND DAMAGE TO HEAD-
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WORKS FROM SWOLLEN RIVERS. FOR EXAMPLE, IMPORTANT MARALA

HEADWORKS ON CHENAB NORTH OF SIALKOT (JUST DOWNSTREAM OF INDIAN KASHMIR BORDER) REPORTS INCREASE IN DISCHARGE FROM 300,000 CUSECS EARLY JULY 16 TO 507,800 LATE IN DAY -- AGAINST "DANGER MARK" OF 400,000. ACCORDING TO RADIO MIDDAY JULY 17, DISCHARGE HAD FALLEN TO 435,000 CUSECS, BUT EXPECTED TO RISE AGAIN. MEANWHILE "BULGE" IS PASSING DOWNSTREAM WITH KHANKI (LOWER CHENAB CANAL) HADWORKS IN GUJRANWAL DISTRICT REPORTING 568,000 CUSECS MORNING JULY 17. SO FAR NO DAMAGE REPORTED TO HEADWORKS ON ANY OF MAJOR RIVERS.

4. NEW CHIEF MINISTER QURESHI ANNOUNCED JULY 16 THAT FLOOD COMMISSION HAD MET UNDER HIS DIRECTION TO REVIEW "PREVAILING AND EXPECTED SITUATION" AND WOULD MEET AGAIN JULY 21. HE ASSURED PUBLIC THAT AUTHORITIES WERE FULLY PREPARED "TO MEET ANY SITUATION".

COMMENT: PROVINCIAL FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM IS IN PLACE THIS YEAR AND WAS SUCCESSFULLY TESTED LAST FALL DURING TARBELA AFFAIR. SOME LOCAL EVACUATION HAS ALREADY TAKEN PLACE.

5. SITUATION APPEARS MANAGEABLE FOR THE PRESENT PROVIDED INORDINATE RAINFALL DOES NOT OCCUR IN NORTHEASTERN DISTRICTS OR UPSTREAM CATCHMENT AREAS NEXT COUPLE DAYS. NO SERIOUS DAMAGE TO FIELD CROPS REPORTED SO FAR; THIS IS, IN FACT, SEASON FOR PLANTING RICE IN FLOODED FIELDS. WE WILL KEEP IN TOUCH WITH FLOOD COMMISSION AND REPORT ANY SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT.
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